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# New study recommends stronger U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation

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The United States should develop closer strategic and military cooperation with Israel to help deter Soviet aggression in the Mediterranean Sea and Persian Gulf, according to a new policy study released today by the conservative Heritage Foundation research center.

"Washington should integrate Israel discreetly into the global anti-Soviet defense system to strengthen deterrence of the Soviet Union in the strategic area between NATO's southern flank and the Persian Gulf," senior Heritage policy analyst James A. Phillips, the author of the study, concluded.

Mr. Phillips' report cautions that Israeli-American strategic cooperation is not a "panacea" for blunting Soviet power in the Middle East, but "without it, the world will be a more dangerous place."

Mr. Phillips also argues that closer cooperation will further regional peace since U.S. military backing may discourage Arab states from waging war against Israel.

For the Israelis, closer strategic cooperation will offset the growing Soviet presence in Syria and may force Damascus to rethink its goal of establishing a "Greater Syria" that would include what is now Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and parts of Turkey.

The United States first began formal military cooperation with Israel in 1983, when President Reagan signed still-secret National Security Decision Directive 111 outlining joint planning, exercises and the pre-positioning of military equipment in Israel, the report states.

The directive created a Joint Political Military Group composed of working-level officials who meet twice a year to hold "a strategic dialogue," according to the report.

Mr. Phillips, a former Congressional Research Service fellow who studied national security affairs at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, says both countries prefer "low-key, low-profile strategic cooperation" rather than a formal defense treaty.

The Israelis fear a treaty would constrain their efforts at regional defense, while the United States is

concerned that a formal defense treaty might undermine U.S. influence among anti-Soviet Moslem nations.

Israel, a close U.S. ally, will receive \$1.8 billion in U.S. military assistance this year and \$1.2 billion in economic aid, making it the single largest recipient of U.S. aid.

Relations between the two countries were strained recently over the espionage case of U.S. Naval Investigative Service intelligence analyst Jonathan Jay Pollard, who pleaded guilty to spying for Israel in an operation the Israeli government says was not officially sanctioned.

U.S. officials said intelligence cooperation with Israel was suspended briefly following Pollard's arrest last November, and Justice Department officials say an indictment against an Israeli official may be forthcoming. Pollard is cooperating with the Justice Department prior to sentencing.

The report praises past Israeli military intelligence cooperation. The Israelis have captured Soviet tanks, radar and surface-to-air missile systems during Arab-Israeli conflicts. An intact MiG-22 that was flown to Israeli by a defecting Iraqi pilot was later turned over to the Pentagon.

"Military intelligence liaison and technical cooperation should be organized to promote the maximum degree of cross-pollination in the joint assessment and countering of the Soviet military threat," the report states.

In the eastern Mediterranean, Israeli military cooperation would

benefit the United States during possible naval battles with the growing Soviet forces there, the report states, adding that closer strategic ties also could offset the declining political reliability of "Premier Andreas Papandreu's anti-American regime in Greece."

Mr. Papandreu's socialist government has threatened to close two important U.S. naval bases in 1988.

"By one estimate, Israel could launch 20 times as many air attack sorties as an aircraft carrier air wing or 12 times as many air combat sorties," the report states.

When combined with Israeli air power, the small Israeli navy, made up of fast missile boats, could challenge the Soviet Navy up to 300 miles from the Israeli coast, according to the report.

In return, the U.S. Sixth Fleet could provide security for Israeli shipping lanes that carry vital imports through the eastern Mediterranean.

"Even if Israel sits out a military conflict with the Soviet Union, Jerusalem could make a major difference in the outcome by permitting U.S. warplanes to use Israeli air bases," the report states. "This would extend the strategic depth of NATO's southern flank and help counterbalance Soviet access to Syrian and Libyan airbases."